

551.506 (261.1) WEATHER OF NORTH AMERICA AND ADJACENT OCEANS

NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

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The unusually stormy weather of the last five months continued during March over the greater part of the North Atlantic. The maximum number of days with winds of gale force occurred in the 5-degree square between the fortieth and forty-fifth parallels and the fortieth and forty-fifth meridians, where they were reported on nine days. Very unfavorable conditions also existed over a large portion of the region between the Azores and Bermudas, and along the American coast, between Nantucket and Florida. In the former region gales were reported on from four to five days, and in the latter, from six to seven days. The frequency of gales over the middle section of the steamer lanes was apparently not far from the normal as shown on the Pilot Chart, while over the section east of the twentieth meridian, the winds were comparatively moderate.

The number of days with fog was considerably less than usual over the Grand Banks, the steamer lanes and off the British coast; they were about normal off the American coast, and considerably above in the Gulf of Mexico, where fog was observed on four days.

TABLE 1.—Averages, departures, and extremes of atmospheric pressures at sea level, 8 a. m. (seventy-fifth meridian), North Atlantic Ocean, March, 1926

Stations	Average pressure	Departure ¹	Highest	Date	Lowest	Date
	Inches	Inch	Inches		Inches	
St. Johns, Newfoundland.	29.72	-0.13	30.24	2d ²	29.18	26th. ²
Nantucket	29.92	-0.08	30.54	6th.	29.22	24th.
Hatteras	30.04	+0.01	30.56	do.	29.48	26th.
Key West	30.08	+0.06	30.26	15th ²	29.82	26th.
Swan Island	29.99	-0.06	30.04	8th.	29.74	26th.
New Orleans	30.10	+0.07	30.38	14th.	29.54	30th.
Turks Island	30.08	+0.06	30.18	6th ²	29.92	24th.
Bermuda	30.09	+0.06	30.46	1st.	29.48	12th.
Horta, Azores	30.14	+0.02	30.66	4th.	29.22	31st.
Lerwick, Shetland Islands	29.77	+0.02	30.50	20th.	28.85	26th.
Valencia, Ireland	30.09	+0.19	30.66	11th.	29.43	27th.
London	30.07	+0.11	30.54	1st.	29.44	28th.

¹ From normals shown on H. O. Pilot Chart, based on observations at Greenwich mean noon, or 7 a. m., 75th meridian.

² And on other dates.

While the average pressure for the month at Horta was nearly normal, the average for the first decade was 30.40 inches, the second 30.12 inches, and for the last 11 days 29.89 inches.

From the 1st to 3d there was a depression off the south coast of Iceland and moderate westerly to southwesterly gales prevailed over the middle and eastern sections of the steamer lanes. On the 4th the center of this disturbance was near the north coast of Scotland; land stations on the British Isles, as well as vessels in the vicinity, reported westerly gales, while on the 3d and 4th the conditions in mid-ocean were about the same as on the first two days of the month.

On the 2d, New York was near the center of a low that moved northeastward along the coast, and on the 4th the center was in the vicinity of St. Johns, Newfoundland, while on the 3d and 4th northwesterly gales occurred in the southwesterly quadrants.

On the 5th and 6th comparatively quiet weather was the rule over the ocean except that on the latter date there was a area of unusually high pressure central near Norfolk, with a crest of 30.62 inches, and vessels in the vicinity of the Bermudas reported northerly winds of gale force, accompanied by barometric readings of from 30.20 to 30.26 inches. During the next 24 hours the pressure in this region fell rapidly, and on the 7th the barometer at Norfolk read 29.92 inches. The anti-cyclonic storm area of the 6th was now central near 40°

N., 53° W., where northeasterly winds, force 8, prevailed, with barometric readings of over 30.20 inches.

On the 8th, the center of a well-developed low was near Father Point and strong gales prevailed between the thirtieth and fiftieth parallels, west of the sixtieth meridian. On this date there was also a disturbance of less extent and intensity off the west coast of Ireland.

By the 9th the western low was over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and a number of vessels in the southwestern section of the ocean encountered moderate gales, while conditions over the British Isles had changed but little since the previous day. The western disturbance apparently curved sharply southward, as on the 10th the center was near 40° N., 55° W., and vessels between the thirtieth and forty-fifth parallels and fiftieth and seventh meridians encountered gales, although a number of ships in the same region experienced moderate weather. This low developed into a very severe and protracted disturbance, as shown on Charts VIII to XIII that cover the period from the 11th to 16th, inclusive. These charts also show the disturbance along the American coast that reached its maximum force on the 14th.

By the 17th the main disturbance had contracted slightly in extent, although strong gales still prevailed over the steamer lanes between the twenty-fifth and fiftieth meridians, and moderate gales in the vicinity of Hatteras.

From the 19th to 21st there was a secondary low over the region between the Azores and the forty-fifth meridian, surrounded by a well-defined storm area. On the 19th and 20th stormy weather was also encountered over the middle section of the steamer lanes, which by the 21st had moderated considerably.

From the 22d to 25th a period of favorable weather ensued over practically the entire ocean, although on the former date the Belgian steamship *Carlier*, as shown in storm report, reported a northerly wind, force 9, in the region between the Bermudas and Nantucket, although other vessels in the vicinity encountered only moderate weather.

On the 25th there was a deep depression over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, surrounded by comparatively light winds.

On the 26th Hatteras was near the center of a low that moved northeastward along the coast, and on the 27th was in the vicinity of Newfoundland, where it remained nearly stationary during the remainder of the month. Comparatively moderate weather prevailed along the American coast during this period, although on the 29th moderate to strong westerly gales occurred over a limited area between the thirty-fifth and forty-fifth parallels and fiftieth and sixtieth meridians. By the 30th this storm had increased both in extent and intensity and westerly to northwesterly winds of hurricane force were encountered over the steamer lanes between the thirtieth and forty-fifth parallels and fortieth and sixtieth meridians.

On the 26th and 27th there was a low of limited extent over the middle section of the steamer lanes, accompanied by moderate gales in the westerly and southerly quadrants.

On the 30th there was a depression central near 47° N., 27° W., that afterwards developed into a very severe disturbance that moved slowly eastward, reaching the British coast early in April. By the 31st this low had moved but little, but had increased in intensity, with minimum barometric readings of 28.50 inches, the storm area covering the greater part of the region between the thirtieth and sixtieth parallels and the twentieth and sixtieth meridians.